

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, TU, MX

SUBJECT: SENATE HEARINGS ON OPIUM

1) ON MARCH 5 SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUVENILE DELIQUENCY, CHAIRED BY BIRCH BAYH, HELD HEARINGS ON CULTIVATION, USE AND CONTROL OF OPIUM. TESTIMONY WAS PROVIDED BY SHELDON VANCE, SENIOR ADVISER FOR INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MATTERS, JOHN BARTELS, ADMINISTRATOR, DEA, DR. ROBERT DUPONT, DIRECTOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE SPECIAL ACTION OFFICE FOR DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, AND EDWARD JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE OPIUM POLICY TASK FORCE, OMB.

2) THE TEXTS OF THE FOUR STATEMENTS ARE BEING TRANSMITTED BY AIRGRAM.

3) UPI STORY OF MARCH 5 REPORTS AS FOLLOWS:

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"(BARTELS) SAID MEXICO HAS REPLACED TURKEY AS THE MAIN

SUPPLIER OF ILLEGAL OPIUM AND ITS BYPRODUCTS, HEROIN AND MORPHINE, FOR THE US. THE MAIN REASON FOR THE SHIFT, HE SAID, WAS A 1971 BAN ON TURKISH OPIUM PRODUCTION THAT WAS RESCINDED LAST YEAR. THE BAN CAUSED A 'VERY MASSIVE DISRUPTION' IN US HEROIN SUPPLIES, CUTTING OFF THE SO-CALLED 'FRENCH CONNECTION' THAT BROUGHT TURKISH HEROIN INTO

THIS COUNTRY, SAID AMBASSADOR SHELDON VANCE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, BARTELS SAID, AMERICAN SMUGGLERS HAVE FOUND IT EASIER TO TRAVEL TO MEXICO THAN TO EUROPE FOR HEROIN, AND MEXICAN BROWN OPIUM NOW ACCOUNTS FOR 50 TO 60 PERCENT OF ILLEGAL US SUPPLIES. ALTHOUGH VANCE SAID 'CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS' HAS BEEN MADE AGAINST HEROIN ADDICTION DURING THE PAST THREE TO FOUR YEARS, BARTELS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT A NEW 'FRENCH CONNECTION' WILL DEVELOP THIS YEAR WHEN TURKEY HARVESTS ITS FIRST OPIUM CROP SINCE THE BAN WAS LIFTED. THE DEA HAS INCREASED THE NUMBER OF OVERSEAS AGENTS AND THEIR 'QUALITY' TO STOP THE FLOW OF TURKISH HEROIN, BARTELS SAID, AND ALSO IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH CANADIAN OFFICIALS."

4) WITH REGARD TO BARTELS STATEMENT THAT BROWN HEROIN ACCOUNTS FOR 50 TO 60 PERCENT OF ILLEGAL US SUPPLIES, UPI STORY OMITTED BARTELS STATEMENT THAT THE ESTIMATE WAS BASED ON SEIZURE DATA.

5) ON TURKISH OPIUM CULTIVATION, BARTELS INITIALLY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GOT WOULD BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE CONTROLS AND UPON FURTHER QUESTIONING STATED THAT A FRENCH CONNECTION WOULD DEVELOP THIS YEAR IF TURKEY IS UNABLE TO CONTROL THE HARVEST. THE SUBSTANCE OF BARTELS COMMENTS WAS THAT USG SHOULD BE PREPARED TO INTERCEPT ANY OPIUM THAT MIGHT BE DIVERTED FROM THE TURKISH CROP. INGERSOLL

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